

Senate Bill No. 670

CHAPTER 663

An act to add Chapter 8.5 (commencing with Section 8720) to Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to Mexican repatriation.

[Approved by Governor October 7, 2005. Filed with
Secretary of State October 7, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 670, Dunn. Mexican repatriation program of the 1930s.

This bill would enact the "Apology Act for the 1930s Mexican Repatriation Program" and make findings and declarations regarding the unconstitutional removal and coerced emigration of United States citizens and legal residents of Mexican descent, between the years 1929 and 1944, to Mexico from the United States during the 1930s "Mexican Repatriation" Program.

The bill would express the apology of the State of California to those individuals who were illegally deported and coerced into emigrating to Mexico and would require that a plaque to commemorate those individuals be installed and maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation in an appropriate public place in Los Angeles.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 8.5 (commencing with Section 8720) is added to Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, to read:

CHAPTER 8.5. MEXICAN REPATRIATION

8720. This chapter may be cited as the "Apology Act for the 1930s Mexican Repatriation Program."

8721. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Beginning in 1929, government authorities and certain private sector entities in California and throughout the United States undertook an aggressive program to forcibly remove persons of Mexican ancestry from the United States.

(b) In California alone, approximately 400,000 American citizens and legal residents of Mexican ancestry were forced to go to Mexico.

(c) In total, it is estimated that two million people of Mexican ancestry were forcibly relocated to Mexico, approximately 1.2 million of whom had been born in the United States, including the State of California.

(d) Throughout California, massive raids were conducted on Mexican-American communities, resulting in the clandestine removal of

thousands of people, many of whom were never able to return to the United States, their country of birth.

(e) These raids also had the effect of coercing thousands of people to leave the country in the face of threats and acts of violence.

(f) These raids targeted persons of Mexican ancestry, with authorities and others indiscriminately characterizing these persons as “illegal aliens” even when they were United States citizens or permanent legal residents.

(g) Authorities in California and other states instituted programs to wrongfully remove persons of Mexican ancestry and secure transportation arrangements with railroads, automobiles, ships, and airlines to effectuate the wholesale removal of persons out of the United States to Mexico.

(h) As a result of these illegal activities, families were forced to abandon, or were defrauded of, personal and real property, which often was sold by local authorities as “payment” for the transportation expenses incurred in their removal from the United States to Mexico.

(i) As a further result of these illegal activities, United States citizens and legal residents were separated from their families and country and were deprived of their livelihood and United States constitutional rights.

(j) As a further result of these illegal activities, United States citizens were deprived of the right to participate in the political process guaranteed to all citizens, thereby resulting in the tragic denial of due process and equal protection of the laws.

8722. The State of California apologizes to those individuals described in Section 8721 for the fundamental violations of their basic civil liberties and constitutional rights committed during the period of illegal deportation and coerced emigration. The State of California regrets the suffering and hardship those individuals and their families endured as a direct result of the government sponsored Repatriation Program of the 1930s.

8723. A plaque commemorating the individuals described in Section 8721 shall be installed and maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation at an appropriate public place in Los Angeles. If the plaque is not located on state property, the department shall consult with the appropriate local jurisdiction to determine a site owned by the City or County of Los Angeles for location of the plaque.